Phase 3 Away Elective Guide

Eligibility & Requirements

- Phase 3 allows up to four optional away electives (unless otherwise restricted).
- Students must have a passing USMLE Step 1 score and be in good academic standing.
- Away electives must be 4 weeks for academic credit, except approved 3-week electives at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, UCLA, Mayo, and the University of Minnesota.
- Students cannot combine two 2-week away electives to create a 4-week elective.

Scheduling & Block Alignment

- If your away elective overlaps with Spiral Weeks, submit an Excused Absence Request Form.
- If your elective does not align with MCW blocks, schedule a vacation or IPD block before or after the away elective to avoid overlap (see page four for a sample student schedule).

Registration in MCWconnect

- Register for AWAY 47201, AWAY 47202, AWAY 47203, and AWAY 47204 in consecutive order.
- Submit the Away Elective Acceptance Form.
- If your away elective is not yet confirmed, register for an MCW course as a backup.

Evaluation

- The host institution must submit either the MCW Away Evaluation Form or the host institution's preferred evaluation (not both) within 30 days.
- Students are responsible for ensuring the host institution submits it to acadreg@mcw.edu.

VSLO Application Process

- Visit VSLO to review participating institutions.
- Most applications open March–April.
- Monitor deadlines carefully.

Non-VSLO Pre-Approval

- Email Dr. Narayan and Dr. Calata in the School of Medicine at least 90 days prior to the non-VSLO start date for approval. If approved, provide them with your acceptance letter.
- Military away electives do not require approval.

VSLO Application Workflow

Step 1: Student Applies

- Log into VSLO when access is granted in September.
- Complete the VSLO Transcript and Academic Standing Release in MCWconnect.
- Complete profile and upload documents.
- Submit applications.

Step 2: Office of the Registrar Reviews

- Allow 1–2 business days for processing before applications are released.
- The Office of the Registrar uploads required documents such as letter of good standing, malpractice insurance, or affiliation agreement information.
- If a student has incomplete documentation, it may delay processing.

Step 3: Host Institution Reviews

- The host institution reviews the application.
- The student is notified of the decision.

Step 4: Student Accepts & Registers

- Register for the appropriate AWAY course.
- Submit the Away Elective Acceptance Form.
- Failure to register or submit acceptance form may delay or deny credit.

Required VSLO Checklist

☐ In September, **open your VSLO email invitation** link and log in within 28 days, or it will expire.

☐ **Submit "Yes" to one-question survey:** MCWconnect Self-Service card → *Student Dashboard* → *Important Questions to Answer*. "Do you authorize MCW to release your academic standing and official transcript to VSLO?"

☐ **Background Check:** Ensure it's ready to upload to VSLO. Some institutions may require a more recent report than the one from matriculation. For background check support, contact klibrizzi@mcw.edu or 414-955-8279.

☐ **Basic Life Support (BLS) Training:** Access your AHA eCard & ensure your BLS will not expire before your away. Contact AHA for more information to renew if needed.

☐ **Mask Fit:** If not completed, schedule with IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com or 414-805-6699.

☐ **OSHA & HIPAA Training:** Ensure completion of your training attestation in Phase 2 Thriving During Clerkship & Phase 3 Preparing for Residency Brightspace courses: Assessments → Quizzes → Attestation. For assistance, Phase 2 students should contact Hannah Fuhrman & Phase 3 students should contact Sarah Sommer.

VSLO Documents

- ☐ **Affiliation Agreement:** If the host institution requests contact information, such as name and email, provide the Office of the Registrar: acadreg@mcw.edu. MCW does not require an affiliation agreement but does accept the AAMC Uniform Clinical Training Agreement.
- ☐ **Drug Screen:** Contact Occupational Health at IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com or 414-805-6699.
- ☐ **Evaluation Form/End-of-Clerkship Evaluation:** Host institution must send either the MCW evaluation or their preferred evaluation form to acadreg@mcw.edu within 30 days after the completion of the rotation. We do not accept more than one grade evaluation.
- ☐ **Health Insurance Coverage:** MCW students are required to carry health insurance but are free to choose their own insurance or use MCW's health insurance: student_health@mcw.edu.
- ☐ **Immunization Records:** Contact Occupational Health at IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com or 414-805-6699 for AAMC Standardized Immunization Form support.
- ☐ **Letter of Good Standing/Dean's Letter of Good Standing/Letter of Support from Dean or Registrar:** If labeled "Home Institution" or "Home Responsibility" in VSLO, the Office of the Registrar will automatically upload after you submit your application. If labeled "Applicant Responsibility," email your request to acadreg@mcw.edu.
- ☐ **Letter of Recommendation:** Must be sent directly by the letter writer (or staff) to acadreg@mcw.edu**.** Letters will not be accepted from students.
- ☐ **Malpractice Insurance/Medical Liability Coverage:** Download the "MCW Medical Student Certificate of Professional Liability" from Risk Management (second link on the page). Coverage is $1,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 annual aggregate. Limits cannot be increased. If higher coverage is required, students must secure additional coverage independently.
- ☐ **O.R. Basics/Scrub Training & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Completed in your surgery clerkship (INTE 23302). If it's identified as an "applicant" responsibility, email request to acadreg@mcw.edu for a letter that verifies your training.
- ☐ **Transcript:** Most host institutions list this as a "home institution" requirement, meaning the Office of the Registrar will automatically upload your transcript after you submit your application; no request is needed. If it is listed as an "applicant" requirement, request your unofficial or official transcript in MCWconnect to upload to VSLO yourself.
- ☐ **USMLE Step 1 Score Report**: MCW does not maintain USMLE transcripts. Request directly from Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). Fee required.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **I'm not able to access VSLO.** If your access link expired or you never received one, email acadreg@mcw.edu to request access.
2. **I still have VSLO access from last year (before a leave). Do I need a new account?** No. Continue using your existing VSLO account.
3. **I'm having issues with VSLO.** Submit the VSLO Contact Form or call VSLO at (202) 478-9878 (Mon–Fri, 7am–5pm CT).
4. **I can't log into CastleBranch.** Use your student email as your username and select "Forgot Password" if needed. If issues persist, contact CastleBranch.

5. **I received a new clerkship grade. Can my VSLO transcript be updated?** Yes. Email acadreg@mcw.edu to request an updated transcript for current and future applications. Note: there is no guarantee host institutions will re-review it.
6. **How do I submit a clerkship evaluation with a final grade?** OASIS evaluations do not include final grades. Run an unofficial transcript from MCWconnect and attach to the evaluation.
7. **Where should my end-of-clerkship evaluation be sent?** Office of the Registrar: acadreg@mcw.edu.
8. **My away rotation requires ACLS, but MCW doesn't offer it.** MCW offers BLS only. For ACLS training, visit APHEwisconsin.com.
9. **The host institution requires a more extensive background check. What should I do?** First, ask the host institution for guidance. If needed, complete an FBI national check. Go to FBI.gov/checks, request electronic history summary check, pay fee, and complete fingerprinting at a local police station. Results typically take 10–15 days after fingerprint receipt.
10. **My application is due tomorrow. Can you finalize it now?** Allow 1–2 business days for processing. Additional time may be needed if requirements are incomplete or if the host has extra requirements.
11. **I need additional malpractice coverage beyond MCW's limits. What should I do?** MCW cannot increase coverage or assist with purchasing additional insurance. Review AAMC's "Malpractice/Liability Insurance" resources. Ask the host institution what coverage they accept. Note: MCW coverage limits are set by Wisconsin law and cannot be changed.
12. **Am I covered if I complete an away rotation outside of an enrolled and approved elective?** No. MCW malpractice insurance only applies to approved, credit-earning rotations. You must obtain your own insurance otherwise.
13. **Will my transcript show the location of my away rotation?** No. It will list the course number and specialty only (e.g., AWAY 47201: Plastic Surgery).
14. **Does my transcript include in-progress courses?** Yes. Registered courses appear under the heading "IN PROGRESS WORK."
15. **Does MCW provide Workers' Compensation coverage?** No. Coverage is only provided to employees. Check with the host institution about requirements.
16. **Do I need a National Provider Identifier (NPI)?** According to AAMC, medical students are eligible to apply for an NPI if required by a host institution.
17. **My away dates don't match MCW block dates.** Register for a vacation or IPD before or after the elective to avoid course overlapping. If an away elective overlaps with Spiral Weeks, you must submit an Excused Absence Request Form. If the request is not approved, you will need to drop the away elective and register for an alternative course. See the sample schedule below for the following example away rotation dates: Jun 29–Jul 26; Jul 27–Aug 23; Nov 2–Nov 27.

Sample MCW Course Dates		**Student Action**
Spiral Week	Jun 29 – Jul 3	**Submit absence request** for Spiral Week
Block	Jul 6 – Aug 2	**Register for AWAY 47201** (aligns closest with away dates: Jun 29 – Jul 26)
Spiral Week	Aug 3 – Aug 7	**Submit absence request** for Spiral Week
Block	Aug 10 – Sep 6	**Register for AWAY 47202** (aligns closest with away dates: Jul 27 – Aug 23)
Block	Sep 7 – Oct 4	Register for a course
Spiral Week	Oct 5 – Oct 16	Attend Spiral Week
Block	Oct 19 – Nov 15	**Register for IPD or vacation** due to overlap with away dates
Block	Nov 16 – Dec 13	**Register for AWAY 47203** (aligns closest with away dates: Nov 2 – Nov 27)